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NEWSLETTER

RESEARCH CENTER FOR DELMARVA HISTORY AND CULTURE
SALISBURY STATE UNIVERSITY
SALISBURY, MD 21801

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Dryden Collection Donated to Research Center

One of the most used collections at the RCDHAC is the Leslie Powell Dryden Collection. Acquired recently, this collection consists of more than five hundred manuscript volumes of records dealing with families of Old Somerset County on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Mr. Dryden, whose roots ran deep in the Eastern Shore, lived much of his life in Hyattsville, Md. Before his death in 1991, Dryden had made plans for his collection to be given to the Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture at SSU, thinking that location to be the most ideal one for individuals interested in researching local and family history of the lower Eastern Shore of Maryland. Mr. Dryden, who had worked in Biochemistry for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, had spent more than fifty-seven years of his leisure time researching the records of Somerset, Worcester, and Wicomico Counties in Maryland. The result of his laborious efforts was the compilation of records tracing more than three thousand eastern shore families from the seventeenth century to the the twentieth century. In some cases, Mr. Dryden's notes on various families stretched to several loose leaf binders, each with several hundred pages of information of the Eastern shore.

Dryden was known nationally for his work on the founding families of the Eastern Shore. He was never too busy to answer correspondence from individuals searching for their Somerset or Worcester County roots. Although Mr. Dryden was not a genealogist, genealogy was his life-long hobby. He was meticulous and thorough in his research, which included first hand searches in all the existing public records and documents at the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Maryland State Archives in Annapolis, Md., as well as records at the county court houses of Somerset, Worcester, and Wicomico Counties. In addition, he familiarized himself with the records of Sussex County, Delaware, and Northampton and Accomack Counties on Virginia's Eastern Shore. He seemed to leave no stone unturned in trying to unravel the often intricate family relationships of early Eastern Shore inhabitants. Although many people might search through wills and deeds to try to find hidden family members, Mr. Dryden did not stop there. He exhausted the original sources, using both existing state and local records, examining a wide variety of available probate records, tax lists, census records, bible records and church records, judicial records, orphans court records, land records, and military records. In addition to these public records, Dryden also carried on a voluminous correspondence with serious researchers throughout the country. All these materials were carefully filed in loose leaf notebooks by family. Each source citation is clearly identified for future reference. Anyone wishing to do local history or genealogical research will find this collection indespensable. Recently, the RCDHAC received a grant to microfilm this extensive collection of records dealing with more than two thousand Eastern Shore families.

Research Center Planning to Grow Into a New Century

At the June 3 meeting of the Salisbury State University Foundation, Inc. the Chairman of the Research Center Board of Directors George Gering presented copies of the Center's long range plans for growth into the year 2000. The Center Co-Directors, Drs. Polly Stewart and Ray Thompson and Mrs. Sylvia Bradley, ably assisted by Assistant Curator Mary Klein and Dr. Peter Lade, have been working hard all this year to develop the plan.

Most pressing at present is the need to hire a full-time Director/Curator. Other staff

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positions should be filled in the next few years, as well. With the rapid growth of collections accessioned this past year, storage space in the special collections section of the Center already is becoming a problem. And, the Center would like to become increasingly active in providing educational programs, exhibits, seminars, and publications to the students and members of the community.

The long-range plan, entitled "Planning to Grow Into a New Century ," can be examined in the Research Center.

Folklore Students Intern in Research Center

Students in Dr. Polly Stewart's Folklore class and Sylvia Bradley's Archival Management class gave valuable assistance to the Research Center during the past spring semester. About a dozen students attended an afternoon seminar in April which acquainted them with the Research Center and gave them short lessons in preservation, accessioning, cataloguing, finding aids, arrangement and description. To complete a course requirement, these students volunteered several hours a week and worked on an individual project. One student organized large collections into series and categories, another began to categorize the map collection, another cleaned and preserved a correspondence collection from the early nineteenth century. Work on the folklore collections, clippings file, The Salisbury Times photograph collection and a Wicomico County Mills collection was also begun.

Bradley and Thompson Awarded Grant by SSU

Sylvia Bradley and G. Ray Thompson, both co-directors of the Research Center, were recently awarded a $1250 by the SSU Office of Grants and Sponsored Research. This grant will enable them to do the necessary work this summer to prepare other requests for larger grants from outside funding agencies.

They hope to acquire funding for the preparation of a guide and series description with index for each of five major collections, in order to make them more readily available for SSU students' research. The five collections are varied in their content and subject matter, but all are large, significant collections which have been acquired over the last several years. One of the first large collections acquired was the Miles Surveyor Papers, a collection of thousands of papers and plats relating to ownership and surveys of land in Somerset and Wicomico Counties. These have been used by many surveyors, lawyers, and individual researchers, but would be made much more meaningful to the academic researcher if a finding aid could be developed. The second collection is the Elijah Hearne Family Papers of approximately 600 deeds, patents, and inventories related to one family's life tenure on the Eastern Shore. The John Jacob Papers Relating to Delmarva History include historical maps, manuscripts, family records and papers, and ledgers. The fourth collection is that of the late Judge Joseph Bailey, well-known local jurist and attorney in the early twentieth century. His papers number into thousands, and only a small portion have been catalogued. The final collection is the Old School Baptist Church Papers, a mixed collection of manuscripts, church minutes, records, photographs, and journals.

The grants sought will enable the Center to hire an archivist full-time for the cataloguing, arranging, writing descriptions, and for the necessary conservation and storage work to be done on the collections.

ANNOUNCING-----

The Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture will resume regular hours, 9am to 4pm, Monday through Friday, on September 7, 1993.

Have a nice summer! See you in September.

Information concerning the SSU Foundation, Inc., SRN 6032 may be obtained by writing to the SSU Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 2655, Salisbury, MD 21802 or from the Secretary of State.

Your financial support is needed to enable us to continue to provide student and community access and use of this facility.

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Mail to :
Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture, Salisbury State University, Salisbury, Md. 21801

SSU Graduate Student Develops Major New Interpretation of Role of Eastern Shore Virginia's Free Blacks

Marianne Scarborough, who received her Master's Degree in History this spring from Salisbury State University, wrote her thesis on the free negroes in Accomack and Northampton Counties Virginia, from 1619 to the outbreak of the Civil War. Her research has revealed some major new interpretations on this topic.

While several studies have been made of slavery in the Chesapeake region, and in Virginia in particular, few have examined the free blacks in this sensitive region. Moreover, Ms. Scarborough made several surprising discoveries in her research. For example, the free black population was found to be much larger throughout the period in these two counties, and grew at a much faster rate than expected. In the first years of settlement in the 17th century, most blacks lived in Northampton County, but after manumission was instituted in 1782 many ex-slaves found the attitudes in that county intolerant and moved in increasing numbers north to Accomack County. By 1860 approximately 80% of all free blacks in the two counties were in Accomack, and free blacks constituted 30% of all blacks in that county. Another surprise was the extent to which free blacks participated in the local economy as apprentices in trades and skilled crafts, rather than as unskilled farm laborers.

Attitudes toward blacks, especially free ones, were always more tolerant in Accomack than in its sister county to the south. This was particularly true in the 19th century. In Accomack there appears to have been a great deal of integration, white families and black families living side by side in many areas; there were very few "pockets" of all black residents.

Ms. Scarborough would like to follow-up this study by looking at those free black landowners, especially. Most "successful" blacks lived in towns in Accomack, but she would like to research those farmers and watermen living in the outlying regions.

Most of Ms. Scarborough's research was done using the primary materials in the Research Center, and she advises any scholar considering research on the Delmarva region to make use of the extensive holdings one can fine here.

"Saving Tips!"

One of the questions we are often asked in the Research Center is, "How can I save some old newspaper clippings?". And, unfortunately, our answer usually is that you cannot do a great deal to ensure long life for newsprint. The problem is that any newsprint produced in the United States since approximately 1870 is made primarily from ground wood pulp rather than rag fibers. Wood is highly acidic, and over time and with exposure to light, even diffused sunlight, the photochemical effect is to hasten the process of deterioration. The paper simply burns itself up. This is why it turns brown and brittle, just as if it had been exposed to heat and even fire. Airborne pollutants add to the deterioration.

Therefore, if you really want to keep the newsprint itself it will help if it is kept in the dark, in an unpolluted atmosphere, and at low relative humidity (approximately 40 to 50%) and temperature below 32^0. In fact, I have known people who sealed the newsprint in a watertight, airtight bag or container and kept them in their freezer! It actually works.

The other ways to aid in preservation are to deacidify the papers and encapsulate them in mylar. Even when this process is used, however, the paper should be kept out of the sunlight. Also, this is a chemical process and would be done by a professional paper conservator or regional conservation facility such as the Research Center. Of course, many newspapers now automatically microfilm their papers in order to reduce the amount of storage space require and at the same time preserving the intellectual content. The Library of Congress reports that when archival-quality, safety base, silver halide film is used it has a useful life potential of several hundred years when properly processed, housed, and handled.

For many who simply want to preserve a clipping or a few pages of newsprint, the simplest and least expensive way may be to make a photocopy.

"CONTEMPORARY FOLKLORE" NOT A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS

In academia, theory about a subject has a way of outstripping popular beliefs about that subject. Students enrolling in my folklore classes at SSU, for example, are likely to enter with outmoded ideas about folklore that they have picked up in school and in the media--principally that folklore is purely historical, having been killed by eduction and technology, and is therefore found only among old and isolated and unlettered people.

One of the first things they learn, however, is that folklore is ongoing, contemporary and a part of the everyday life of all of us, whatever our walk of life or our level of education. This "process-performance" approach to the study of folklore can be quite liberating to students once they realize that they can use themselves, their families, their friends and their jobs as the subject of their independent research in the course.

In testimony to this invigorating discovery, the SSU Folklore Archives are full of student collections based upon fieldwork conducted within the milieux of the students' own lives. This year's crop includes collections on sport motorcycling, surfing, "hanging out" (a social activity of teens and young adults), ritual insults, "Deadheads" (fans of the rock group "The Grateful Dead"), athletes, Ocean City as a workplace, drinking games, office xerography, and Catholic schools.

Of course, some of the more "traditional" subjects are also covered by students as well, including haunted houses, the Jersey Devil, the Pocomoke Forest, agricultural traditions in Dorchester County, crab packing, and healing.

Anyone with a scholarly interest in Delmarva history and culture is welcome to look at these collections. Some collections have had restrictions placed upon them, but others may be reviewed simply upon request to the archive director, Polly Stewart (campus ext. 84241).

NEW ACQUISITIONS

Among the recent additions to the RCDHAC holdings are more than two hundred fifty rolls of microfilms of original records. Among the most requested of these new purchases are a seventy-two volume set of the Maryland Archives, containing transcriptions of many seventeenth and eighteenth century Somerset records. A valuable source for the revolutionary war period is the forty-one volume set of the Lloyd papers. The Center has also acquired a complete set (27 volumes) of censuses from 1790-1900 for Wicomico, Worcester, and Somerset counties. For the early history of Somerset County, the Somerset Judicial Records, (46 volumes), stretching from 1671-1789 are an invaluable source of information on social and economic relations on early Delmarva. Twenty volumes of Chancery Records for Worcester and Somerset Counties add additional important information on socio-economic history. Just as significant are the Rent Rolls and Debt Books of Somerset and Worcester Counties, from 1733 to 1775, which provide further important economic data about families on the lower Eastern Shore. Finally, a four volume set of Petitions and Commissions for Worcester County from 1796-1816 give valuable insights into the family relationships and land-holding practices of Eastern Shore individuals. These microfilms should prove very useful for both student and community researchers.

For students interested in the political and legal development of early Virginia, the thirteen volume hard copy of Hening's Statutes: a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia from 1619, will provide important primary information. The four volume Pension Roll of 1835 is essential for those studying the pensioners of the Revolutionary War, while Ralph Whitelaw's two volume Virginia's Eastern Shore provides invaluable assistance to those trying to trace their families land-holding patterns in early Northampton and Accomack counties of Virginia.

Other recent additions are Henry Peden's two volume Maryland Deponents, 1634-1799. These volumes list the names of those people who were called into court to give testimony, giving their ages, and occasionally mentioning other bits of personal information about early Marylanders. Jane Baldwin Cotton's Maryland Calendar of Wills, 1744-1753 will be quite helpful for those trying to place their ancestors in family relationships and often provides interesting information about an individual's wealth, his land holdings, and personal possessions. Bruce Bendler's Colonial Delaware Records, 1681-1713 and Craig W. Horle's Records of the Courts of Sussex County Delaware, 1677-1710 (2 vols.) are welcome additions for Sussex County researchers. For serious students of westward migration, Henry Peden's Marylanders to Kentucky, 1775-1825 will help researchers locate missing Eastern Shore families who began the trek west in the late eighteenth century.

New Fee Schedule for Users Announced

Beginning in September, 1993 the Research Center will institute a users' fee charge to all non-students. Any researcher presenting a valid Student Identification will not be charged for using the holdings of the Research Center, but other researchers who expect to use the holdings on an ongoing basis, or more than two days in a six month period, will be asked to pay an annual fee of $25.00. Payment of this fee entitles the user to full use for research of any holding in the Research Center not disignated "Restricted", to free attendance at Research Center sponsored workshops and smeniars, mailings of forthcoming events, and the Center newsletter. Researchers who use the holdings in the Research Center fewer than two days in a dix month period will be asked to pay an admission fee of $4.00 each day they use the Center. The Research Center accepts cash, checks, or money orders. Checks should be made payable to Salisbury State University Foundation, Inc., and noted for the account of the "Research Center DHAC".

The Directors of the Research Center regret having to implement this policy, but rising costs of maintenance on equipment such as microfilm readers/printers, photocopying machines, and conservation costs have made it necessary. We sincerely hope no one is inconvenienced by this policy.

Oh, Those Feisty Ladies!

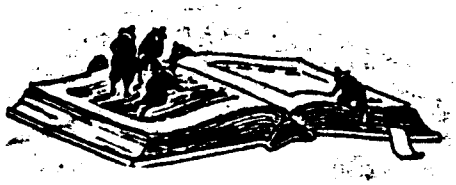
New Exhibit Mounted in Research Center

An exhibit dedicated to the activist careers of two Antebellum Delmarva women, Clara Gunby and Anna Ella Carroll, was recently mounted in the Research Center. The exhibit was planned and curated primarily by Lynn Prettyman, a May graduate in History from SSU, who made this her primary project for the course in Museum Studies she was taking in the spring.

Anna Ella Carroll was a Unionist during the Civil War, and unofficial advisor to President Abraham Lincoln on the strategy to win the Tennessee River campaign. She also was advisor to Maryland's Governor Thomas Hicks. While her contributions were not recognized in her own lifetime, in 1992 she was posthumously inducted into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame. The silver bowl presented at that time is highlighted in the exhibit.

Clara Gunby's sentiments were on the opposite side during the Civil War. An outspoken Southerner, whose home was in Pocomoke, she made herself a thorn in the side of Union troops occupying the Lower Shore, and devoted herself to the Confederate cause. Her letters and diaries have been loaned to the Research Center by the owner, and several are on view in the exhibit.

To enhance the image of the antebellum period, the exhibit also includes a ladies dress from the 1840s, on loan from the Julia Purnell Museum in Snow Hill, and a mantle clock given to the Research Center by Robert Elzey.



Summer Hours Announced
Volunteers To Man Research Center

Volunteers from the community will be staffing the Research Center again this summer, on Mondays from 3:00 to 9:00 pm. Without the graduate assistant or work-study students who normally work in the Center throughout the regular academic year, it looked as if the Center would have to be closed for the summer. Many community patrons expressed an interest in using the facilities during the summer months, however, and a few of these came to our rescue and volunteered to become summer-staffers! Barbara Trader, a Salisbury attorney, is organizing the volunteer force, as she did last summer, and anyone who might wish to join the group can contact her at 749-0161.

In addition, Don Schmidt and Sue Connor, graduate students at SSU are attempting to work out a schedule where they would staff the Center on Wednesdays. That schedule will be announced in a few days. Anyone who might be interested in working on that day can call Don at 546-8268.

A hearty thanks to all these volunteers. Without them it would be necessary to close this valuable research facility during the entire summer months.

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To: